

# ADVOCATING and LOBBYING

## For Dumfries and Galloway



*Making Our Voice Heard*





## Foreword

Dumfries and Galloway Council is committed to speaking up for the region. Through effective advocacy and lobbying we can raise our region's profile and can communicate our Council's messages on a variety of issues more successfully.

This strategy creates a framework which aims to ensure that the organisation is effective in influencing decision-makers and supports our Priorities and Commitments. This will increase our opportunity to influence major projects, decisions and reforms, and to attract investment into our region.

Our region faces many challenges. We know that by changing our approach to advocacy and lobbying we will have a more effective and consistent delivery of our Council's messages. By raising our profile with local politicians, national agencies and government decision-makers they will be more aware of our needs and aspirations.

Our Council should be lobbying on issues of particular importance for Dumfries and Galloway and advocating all that is positive about our region. We should all be ambassadors for this region, one which is full of inspirational places and people and has immense potential for playing a greater part on the national and international stage.

Achieving our priorities requires commitment and participation from all of our Members and staff and those who can support us in advocating for Dumfries and Galloway.

**Contents**

Getting the best deal for Dumfries and Galloway..... 5

Our Vision ..... 5

What is advocacy and lobbying?..... 5

What has our approach been to date?..... 6

What are the changes we want to see? ..... 7

What will we be advocating? ..... 8

How will we ensure we are proactive?..... 9

Who are the advocates? ..... 10

Who can support our advocacy? ..... 12

What should we consider when developing our messages?..... 13

How will we communicate our message? ..... 14

How should we track and evaluate our advocacy activity?..... 16

**Appendices**

Appendix 1 - Guideline and Example for Developing an Issue/  
Opportunity to Action ..... 17

Appendix 2 - Guideline to Planning an Advocacy project..... 18

Appendix 3 - Worked Illustrative Example ..... 20

Appendix 4 - Working in Partnership Example ..... 24

Appendix 5 - Building Relationships Example..... 25

Appendix 6 - Guideline for Delivering an Advocacy Message ..... 26

Appendix 7 - Successful Message Example ..... 27

Appendix 8 - Constructing and Communicating our Message Example ..... 28

Appendix 9 - Guideline to Monitor and Evaluate an Advocacy project ..... 30

## 1. Getting the best deal for Dumfries and Galloway

This Strategy and guide is aimed at raising our profile and influence to get the best deal possible for Dumfries and Galloway.

It will help us promote our Priorities and Commitments to improve the lives of those who live here as well as lobbying on the new issues that come along that will impact on our region.

It is written as a practical document to support our staff and Members to express our needs and aspirations as well as promoting our region and the opportunities it offers.

It looks at where we've been and where we are going, highlighting the culture change required to achieve our aspirations. It provides practical guidance to aid staff and Elected Members to move their ideas into actions and advocacy projects. We have been successful in our lobbying work before and some good practice examples are provided to help us think about lobbying.

## 2. Our Vision

*'Dumfries and Galloway will be a successful participant on the regional and national stage, sharing our strengths, needs and aspirations.'*

Our Vision is that Dumfries and Galloway Council's voice will be more frequently heard and acted upon. The profile of our region will be enhanced, ensuring we are both effective in influencing decision-makers and in promoting our stance, our needs, and our successes.

## 3. What is advocacy and lobbying?

*'Advocacy is the process of directly and indirectly influencing decision makers, stakeholders and relevant audiences to support and implement actions.'*

Advocacy is used throughout this document as an umbrella term which incorporates lobbying and broader work to promote the interests of our region. Through effective advocacy we can raise our profile and communicate our message on a variety of issues more successfully. It is important to recognise that when influencing decision-makers, the image of our Council is as significant as the argument we make. Advocating for Dumfries and Galloway is an on-going process concerned with building up and maintaining a positive image of our region and reputation of our Council.

Advocacy forms the foundations on which effective lobbying campaigns can be built. Lobbying is about letting the decision-makers know exactly what you think about a particular issue in such a way that they are persuaded to favour your preferred outcome. To maintain a positive reputation and increase the impact of our messages we will lobby on a select few issues - our Priorities.





#### 4. What has our approach been to date?

Until now, most of our lobbying activity has not been undertaken through an understood or consistent process. We have had success with various lobbying campaigns but this has largely been because of the work of a few rather than as an organisation as a whole. There is currently no system or framework which is followed.

Advocacy is most effective when it is carefully considered and strategically planned. A lack of strategic leadership on our lobbying advocacy approach, as well as a lack of clarity about roles and responsibilities, has resulted in much of our past activity being performed in a reactive, ad-hoc manner on localised issues. However, our Council has experienced success when we have been more strategic and proactive in how we approach our advocacy, such as on national issues and around European Union funding.

Without a consistent Council-wide approach different agendas have been lobbied on and there has been at times a lack of consistency in the messages conveyed to decision-makers. A more cohesive approach will be achieved with clearer advocacy aims; an increased understanding of the issues and benefits surrounding our arguments; and greater communication between Elected Members, Corporate Management Team and wider staff groups.

#### **What have we achieved through past lobbying?**

- Improvements to strategic roads such as the Dunragit bypass and Kinmount Straits upgrade along the A75.
- Our contribution to the national economy has been recognised and we have secured biannual meetings with the Cabinet Secretary for Finance and Sustainable Growth.
- Increased access to Next Generation Broadband with coverage across the region increasing from 26% to 61% through Next Generation Broadband.
- Secured EU funding, such as £19m ring-fenced for South of Scotland in the 2007-13 programme.

## 5. What are the changes we want to see?

We want to effect a culture change in the way we approach our lobbying work. This Strategy will clarify what we are advocating for; who should be responsible for advocating; and how it should be carried out.

This will result in:

- Increased understanding of lobbying, advocacy and its importance
- Strategic direction from Elected Members and the Corporate Management Team, and all our activity agreed through an understood process
- More effective and consistent communication, both internally between Elected Members and Council staff, and externally to the relevant people/organisations
- Increased work on identifying and building relationships with those who can partner us in advocating for our region
- A proactive as well as reactive manner to advocacy
- All advocacy and lobbying opportunities / knowledge shared with the relevant people and all activity undertaken tracked, measured and evaluated

Our Council will benefit from having a more effective approach to advocacy. It will help raise our profile with local politicians, national agencies and governments who will be more aware of our needs and aspirations. We will build support for issues of particular importance to us, and identify and share expertise across the whole organisation. This will, in turn, increase our opportunity to influence major projects, decisions and reforms, and to attract investment into the region. Together we will be able to advocate more successfully on, and help fulfil, our Priorities and Commitments.



European funding to support agriculture and farmers

### 6. What will we be advocating?

Our Council's advocacy will focus on our Priorities and Commitments. These are agreed by Elected Members. By focussing our advocacy/lobbying work on the Priorities and Commitments we will have a clear and consistent approach to our message.

We will lobby on a select few issues to maintain a positive reputation and not dilute the impact of our message. These need to be carefully chosen and planned as we will be operating on a stage in which our message and delivery will be under greater scrutiny.

We will be more aware of emerging external influences and policies. The implications and impact of these on our region will be considered and added where appropriate. This will ensure that there is an opportunity to highlight new and emerging issues whilst working within the agreed Council Priorities and Commitments.

Infrastructure  
improvements





## **7. How will we ensure we are proactive?**

Our Council will be proactive as well as reactive in its approach to advocacy. Current lobbying activity is often reactive and based on short-term, localised issues. Being reactive can be a positive quality in itself, but by only using this approach it makes it harder to make the case we want to put forward. This is because we have limited preparation time and risk approaching issues without establishing relationships and fully setting out our arguments.

We will be more confident in leading and acting on issues which affect us. Opportunities to advocate can include contributing to consultations, attending events, networking with decision-makers and partnering with an organisation on a campaign which we have an interest in. By doing this our opinion is more likely to be taken into account and our profile will be raised at a national level.

There is scope to advocate on more long-term strategic issues. Our Council does undertake effective lobbying on strategic issues, such as on the EU 2007-2013 programme which ring-fenced £19 million for South of Scotland, and an increase in this planned and strategic approach to advocacy is encouraged.

To ensure that we are more proactive and strategic in our lobbying we need to identify and consider how emerging trends and developments might potentially affect current policy and practice. As an organisation we should adopt methods of horizon scanning to identify future risks and opportunities and act upon them. Horizon scanning is used as an overall term for analysing the future: considering how emerging trends and developments might potentially affect our current practice. This can be achieved by keeping on top of current events and keeping tabs on policy development such as upcoming Government business.

Horizon scanning will benefit each individual lobbying campaign as there will already be existing information on who the appropriate influencers or decision-makers are, and what the policy timetable for that issue is. Using this helps us manage risk as possible issues and solutions will be known and acted upon ahead of final decisions.

We should all contribute to the process of horizon-scanning and have a shared knowledge of the strategic issues as well as the operational or local issues. Our Council's officers and Elected Members have experience and knowledge in their area of work who can offer valuable insight. A framework and practical example which shows in five key steps how an issue is identified to being addressed is provided in Appendix 1.

It is the responsibility of the Corporate Management Team and Elected Members together to assess the benefits and risks of acting upon selected issues and opportunities. They will decide if we have the scope and resources to do so. Committee meets regularly and are provided with briefings and updates on a range of matters, providing the opportunity for potential new advocacy areas to be discussed at an early stage.

Longer term issues, highlighted through horizon-scanning, which do not need to be acted upon immediately can feed into the annual Business Planning review process and fit into our existing framework.

### 8. Who are the Council advocates?

Advocating for Dumfries and Galloway should be everybody's business. All Council staff and Elected Members will work together to deliver advocacy work for the benefit of the region and deliver on our Priorities and Commitments.

We are all ambassadors for our region. The image others have of us can affect our credibility and ability to be listened to. When representing our Council we need to positively promote Dumfries and Galloway.

To ensure that we are strategic in our approach and that advocacy work is fulfilled there needs to be clear roles and responsibilities. Each group should be aware of their role in the advocacy process.

#### **Elected Members:**

Strategic political leadership on what areas we should be advocating and lobbying for will be formed by Elected Members through the Council Priorities and Commitments. Elected Members on Committees already work closely with Council staff and any advocacy/lobbying work relevant to their Committee subject should be discussed through this channel.

Any issue which an Elected Member feels we should be lobbying on but is not specifically identified in the Priorities and Commitments should use existing channels of raising this – i.e. at relevant Service committee or at Full Council.

Elected Members should make use of contacts in national groups, committees and other relevant outside bodies.

#### **Corporate Management Team:**

Directors and Heads of Service need to understand and fulfil an advocacy role. Every Directorate should know what to lobby on, what their lobbying/advocacy requirements are and what they are currently doing to fulfil that agenda. These will be clear and evident through Business Planning, with Corporate Services providing support in developing the messages.

Heads of Service will be responsible for delivering the advocacy work in their Service: the reporting of their lobbying through briefings, performance management and sharing all relevant information with Corporate Management Team. They should report through the existing framework - through their 1-to-1 meetings with the Directors and through the Business Plan reporting process. Sharing possible opportunities, issues and solutions will spread expertise and responsibility across our Council.

**Staff:**

When delivering frontline services, preparing information or attending events it is important staff recognise they are representing the interests of our Council, the region and the public we serve.

We all have an influence over our image and the greater our reputation the more likely we are to get the decision we want for Dumfries and Galloway. Advocacy work should be ongoing and complement our specific campaigns. This is because our reputation with the decision-maker is as important as how we make our argument and why many organisations that lobby effectively place high importance on public relations.

Service teams within each directorate will be expected to undertake advocacy and lobbying activities in the areas highlighted within their Directorate's Business Plan. Relevant corporate support and training will be provided to those who need it. Guidelines and examples on what to consider when developing a strategy for individual issues is available as an Appendix (2 and 3) to this document.

Advocacy activity will be monitored closely to determine its effectiveness. Corporate Services will assist in co-ordinating the reporting and collating of advocacy activities, to ensure that lobbying/advocating information is communicated throughout our organisation.





### 9. Who can support our advocacy?

Successful advocacy and lobbying requires effective working relationships with external individuals and organisations. Working with others supports and strengthens our objectives and puts greater pressure on decision-makers to consider and accept our 'asks'.

We want to be consulted regularly by government rather than an organisation which merely shouts from the side-lines. Working within recognised partnerships we are more likely to achieve this greater professional and insider approach to advocacy. Appendix 4 provides an example of where we have worked well in a Partnership in the past.

Elected Members and staff will develop new working relationships and aim to maintain them after the conclusion of a campaign. By maintaining new and pre-existing relationships our Council will be in a stronger position to receive support with future advocacy or encounter policy opportunities sooner.

Our Council has a wealth of experience in working within partnerships both at a strategic level as well as operational. In a lobbying context we are active members of the South of Scotland Alliance, as well as other partnerships such as North Channel Partnership. Our Elected Members and officers also sit on many professional and national groups such as Society of Scottish Local Authority Chief Executives (SOLACE) and the Timber Transport Forum. Some of our staff hold influential roles on these national groups, including chairing them. An example of how influential these can be is available as Appendix 5.

At a strategic level our Council has responsibility for providing support to our Community Planning Partnership, Dumfries and Galloway Strategic Partnership. In this forum we work with the public, private, and Third Sectors to coordinate our service delivery and respond to identified need.

We should be aware of our roles in partnerships and build on these. This ensures that when new areas of potential advocacy work are identified we are well placed to work with existing partnerships and/or identify potential other partners.

Our Council should be aware of the existing protocols in place when advocating with others, or when our advocacy work will affect any of our Partnerships. Our Strategic Partnership has already agreed a good practice guide for working in partnership: <http://www.dumgal.gov.uk/communityplanning/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=13950&p=0>

We will also maximise our input into existing structures such as CoSLA (Convention of Scottish Local Authorities). Our Council has structures in place to support our Elected Members attending CoSLA Executive Groups and meetings of the Convention.

Our Council will work hard to maintain a dialogue with our regional representatives (MSPs, MPs and MEPs) in various Parliaments – Holyrood, Westminster and Brussels – to inform them of our Priorities and Commitments and our lobbying aims within them. Their engagement and influence will enhance our voice and promote our messages at the level in which they work. To do this we will hold biannual meetings with these local politicians so we can develop a shared understanding and advocate together for Dumfries and Galloway.

Our citizens will benefit from successful lobbying and are potentially our biggest advocates. It is important not to lose sight of this and consideration should be given as to how and when we engage with our citizens when planning our advocacy work.

## 10. What should we consider when developing our messages?

When promoting our successes, building relationships at a national level or replying to consultations stating our Council's position we will use our Priorities and Commitments and existing work-related knowledge.

When lobbying on a specific issue we need to spend time constructing the 'asks' of our campaign more carefully and consider how best to deliver them. Lobbying is a process of persuasion and to do that we need to construct and deliver clear and realistic 'asks' which others will buy into and act upon.

We should remember that we are dealing with people, rather than issues. It is not the issue that we need to influence but the decision-maker. Though lobbying approaches can differ, evidence shows that all people tend to be convinced by the same techniques: a clear and reasonable 'ask' backed up with evidence, support of others and delivered well.

Before constructing our 'asks' we need to identify our target audience as this will influence what we say and how we say it. This means that not all our messages within a particular campaign need to be the same, however they must not be conflicting. We must use consistent evidence to strengthen our case.

When identifying audiences we should keep in mind that it is often best not to approach the ultimate decision-maker first. Most successful lobbying campaigns involves laying significant ground-work and building relationships with those around the decision-maker who can help our case.

We need to be careful not to adopt a 'cap in hand' approach to lobbying. We should try and construct messages that are positive, whilst still stressing our genuine need for their decision. For instance, if we can evidence to decision-makers how they can benefit from helping us then we will find positive common ground (rather than just asking for what we need). We have successfully achieved this in the past and an example is provided as Appendix 7.

Sometimes it is beneficial to think creatively when constructing our message and how we will deliver it. Though there may be an element of risk attached to this approach, if we are successful we will positively stand out from the crowd. This could be achieved for example by including practical and successful examples in our lobbying.

A guideline setting out points to consider when delivering your message is provided in Appendix 6.

### 11. How will we communicate our message?

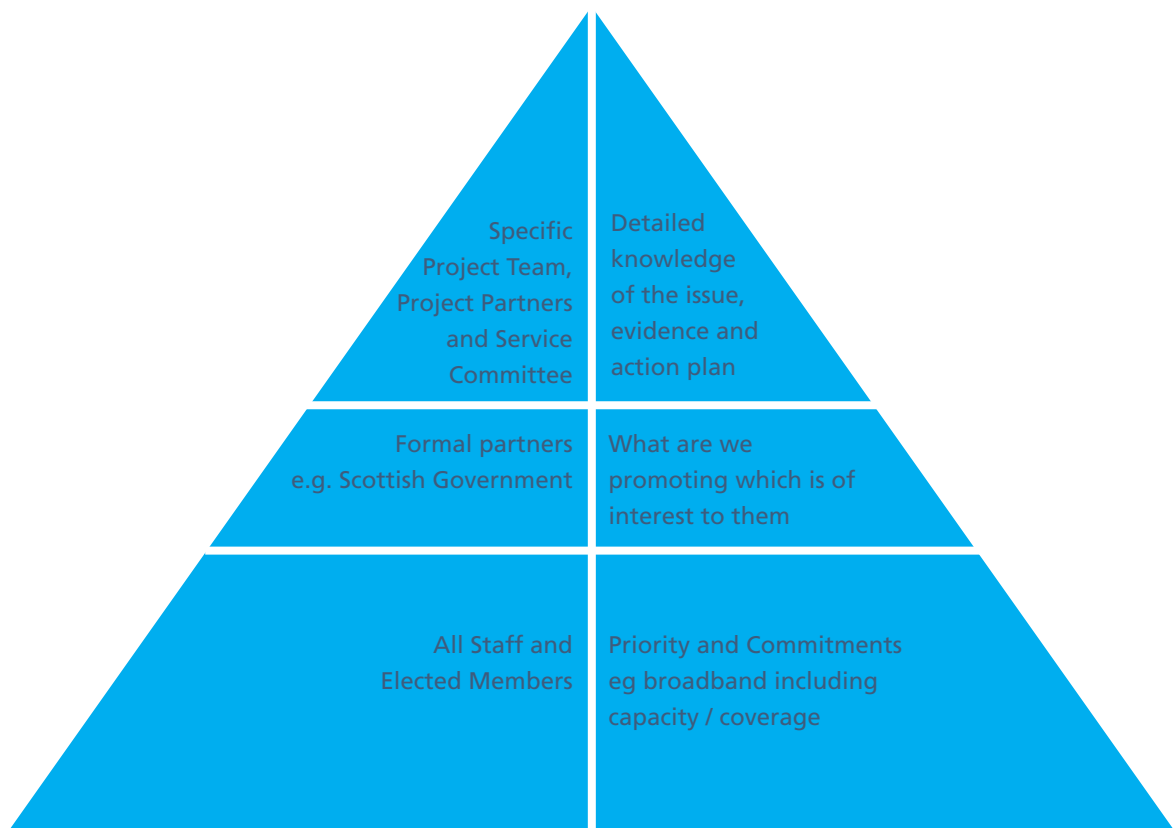
We must communicate our messages well, both internally and externally, if we are to be effective at advocating.

#### Internal communications

We must present our messages or 'asks' with a unified voice. To ensure this, we must all be clear what our agreed messages are.

Making everyone aware is important as projects/campaigns work at various levels. Corporate messages must be communicated to all staff. Relevant information should be distributed throughout the organisation at all levels. Varying levels of information will be required depending on the level of involvement each group has in advocating.

Elected Members have identified the need for increased and more robust briefings and feedback from Council staff. It is important that staff provide the relevant information to enable Elected Members to perform their role. Likewise, staff would benefit from briefing feedback.







### **External communications**

Good two-way communication lies at the heart of all Council business. In order to enhance our Council's reputation, build positive relations and trust, we need to make sure that all stakeholders and decision-makers know what we stand for, what we are trying to achieve, what activities we are undertaking and why, and what difference these activities will make for local people.

Each individual campaign must stay on message, take appropriate measures to make their argument well and ensure that everyone knows what the message is.

We should use our workforce to best effect. It is best to consider the specific skills needed for a certain advocacy task and so the right people undertake it.

A Communications Plan must be constructed and deliver for our advocacy messages externally. It must ensure our external communications are effective so to as protect and enhance the reputation of Dumfries and Galloway Council and provide the right message.

The right information, people, format and time will vary depending on what we are advocating. Communication Plans should identify who our audiences may be and the various communication channels we can use. An example of us tailoring and communicating our message well can be found in Appendix 8.

## 12. How should we track and evaluate our advocacy activity?

Our Council should record advocacy direction and work on identified issues. For an organisation as large and varied as ours it is essential to have an access point to know what we are currently advocating on, who does what advocating and how effective we have been. It will be Corporate Services responsibility to encourage and ensure this.

It is recognised that we do not need to record every minor detail; successful lobbying is often built on relationships and trust and so to record everything would be impractical and may work against what we are trying to achieve. However, this doesn't prevent us from sharing valuable information between colleagues.

### Tracking

Advocacy work which is to fulfil a Business Plan action/project will be logged and reported within that project. Online information will be regularly updated and will act as the portal for all lobbying information. A simple and quick online update option will be available to encourage use, and detailed updates on formal meetings will be required, and briefings for Corporate Management Team and Elected Members as necessary.

### Evaluation

It is important that we evaluate our advocacy and lobbying activity. By evaluating our advocacy work we can improve on future activity by learning what worked and what did not. Advocacy is not just solely for accessing funding and so other benefits, such as raising the region's profile, must be considered when evaluating outcomes. A practical guideline on when and how to evaluate our advocacy is set out at Appendix 9.

Through effective tracking and evaluating our Council will be able to evidence that it has achieved improvements on key policy areas through its influence and campaigning, delivering prosperity and better wellbeing of our communities.

Infrastructure  
improvements



## Appendix 1 – Guideline and Example for developing an Issue/Opportunity to Action

### From Issue/ Opportunity to Action

1. Emerging issue or opportunity to advocate on is identified. This could be through horizon scanning, looking to the future to see what emerging issues may affect us or we could utilise upon. Identification of an issue may be raised from any Council Officer, Elected Member, partner organisation or member of the public.
2. The issue is brought to the attention to the relevant Head of Service(s). Who should be notified will depend on what the issue is.
3. The issue will be discussed at a strategic level. Directors should raise relevant issues with the Chief Executive during their monthly meetings.
4. Officers should work with Elected Members to discuss the issue and the strategic issues surrounding it.
5. Appropriate action agreed -whether to take no further action or to take action by developing a lobbying case to implement or take to Service Committee.



### Commonwealth Youth Summit Example

1. The opportunity to host the Commonwealth Youth Summit which was The Scottish Governments main Youth Work Event for the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games. This was a high profile event bringing over 250 young people from across the Commonwealth to Scotland. The event was identified as forming a key part of the Dumfries and Galloway Legacy Plan.
2. The opportunity was identified by a member of staff participating in a national group. In turn, it was brought to the attention of the relevant Service Manager, Head of Service and Director of Community and Customer Services.
3. The item was discussed and approved by Corporate Management Team. The Chief Executive's role on the national legacy working group helped to influence key decision makers.
4. A report detailing the opportunity and resources required was presented to Policy and Resources Committee for consideration.
5. Agreed at Committee to apply to host this event and to allocate the necessary budget.



## Appendix 2 – Guideline to Planning an Advocacy project

Planning your advocacy before commencing is essential. Though each advocacy campaign will differ there are several key areas that you can consider and plan to ensure your campaign is effective. Advocacy and lobbying planning is not dissimilar to planning any other project.

Advocacy/lobbying success is reliant on how strong your case is, when and how well your message is persuaded, and whom you have identified to lobby. Therefore the risks of wasting time and resources and damaging your reputation without adequate planning in these areas are great.

### What influence are you trying to achieve?

- You need to be clear in what you are asking for and why.
- Your 'ask' should reflect your objective (i.e. the change you want to see).
- The activity is more likely to be positive if you have a specific clear message, a coherent argument to back this up and a defined tangible outcome.

### Who is responsible for leading the project?

- Major roles and responsibilities should be discussed and be clear from the outset.
- Identify a campaign lead so that there is someone who is overseeing all campaign activity.
- Once any roles have been agreed upon then they should be included into your plan so they are on record and serve as a reminder and reference point.
- There may be many different aspects of the Plan/Strategy so this process may be on-going as Members and officers may be brought into aid the project at various times based on their particular skillset and knowledge.

### What are the risks and benefits?

- Like any other project, risks and benefits should be assessed and noted.
- Once identified, be sure to plan how you aim to manage and minimise the risk and maximise the benefit.

### What is the policy background?

- It is important that the policy background of the subject is known: proceedings, interests, responsibilities and channels of influence and how these relate to each other.
- Understanding the background allows our efforts to be focused and results to be maximised.
- You will need to relate to the interests of the full range of stakeholders and use multiple points of entry.

### Who are you trying to influence?

- Identify and understand whom you need to influence and how best to approach them.
- The targets must be specific (e.g. a person, media, government agency or department or organisation).
- Who is the key target? Remember that your real target may not necessarily be the 'Title' (if approaching Government, often best to speak to civil servants first, offer suggestions and see where you stand). Your primary targets may be the policymakers/offices/etc that have the power to make the change you are advocating for.
- If you cannot influence your primary targets, choose secondary targets. A secondary target is the person/group/etc. you can influence who can then, in turn, influence your primary target.

### Who are your partners?

- Not every advocacy issue requires partnership support. However the more support you have the stronger the argument is likely to be so form strong partnerships with other groups/organisations if possible.
- Identify partners who will bring helpful, unique skills and contributions to your effort.
- Make sure you and your potential partners are in agreement about the issue and its potential solutions.
- If differences in a partnership do arise (since each member of a coalition has its own interests and priorities) then these should be managed rather than ignored.

### Who may be supportive or oppose your campaign?

- Consider who is involved around the same issue/same arena.
- Establish who else is on your side, those against and those in-between so you can adapt arguments and efforts for each.
- Reach out to wider audience/support as well if needs be - public, businesses etc.

### What is your timetable?

- Think about what upcoming events, significant dates, or government decisions might be important mobilization and communication opportunities.
- There should be a strategic timetable based on the policy knowledge (knowing when to act on an issue), as well as individual timetable for each of the campaign's activity.
- Advocacy activities should be timed to occur just before key decisions are made or before an important event.

### What resources do you have available?

- Is there an available budget for funding activity? (e.g. promotional material or events)
- What officer and Elected Member capacity and availability is there?
- Do available people have the right skills or is training required?

## Appendix 3 – Worked Illustrative Example

### Securing additional training places for young people

#### 1 Relevance to Priority and Commitment

**Priority 1** – Build the local economy

**Commitment 1** – Improve the level of skills within our communities and workforce.

**2013-2016 Single Outcome Agreement – 2:** We will prepare our young people for adulthood and employment.

#### 2 Will it help fulfil Business Plan objectives?

Planning & Environment Services have specific corporate lead responsibility for Priority 1.

It's Business Plan (2015-2018 Appendix 1 (As at 30 April 2015)) sets out a clear vision for the Service and outlines the ways in which it will deliver and measure progress on each Commitment in Priority 1.

If advocating/lobbying on the securing of additional training places, and in turn, further funding for the higher and further education is successful, then it may contribute to the fulfilment of a number of its desired outcomes:

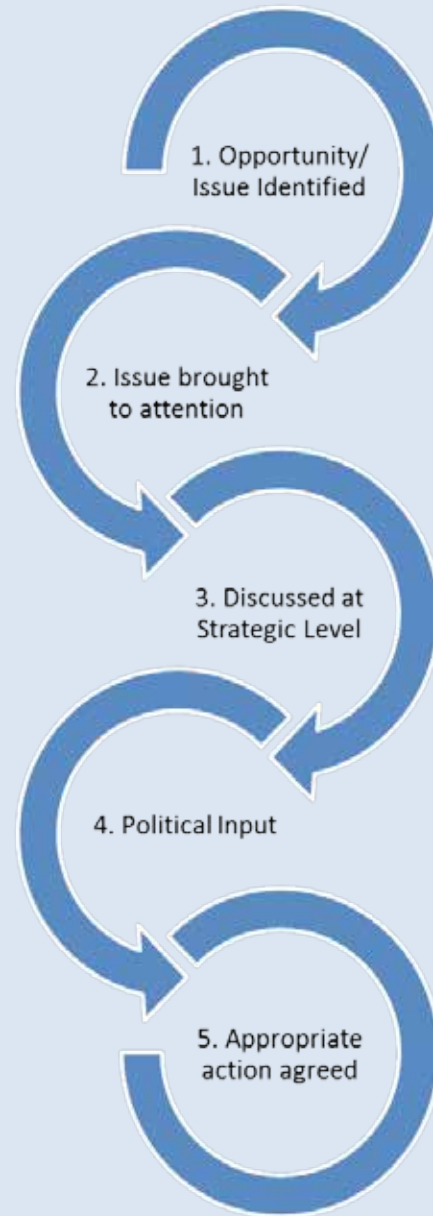
- To continue to develop a highly, relevantly skilled population, whether in schools, colleges, universities, communities or workplaces, and ensuring this talent and ability is applied effectively in sustainable employment is essential to improving productivity and sustainable economic growth
- Increased number of young people and adults accessing training and employment opportunities

College Students



### 3 How was the issue identified if not within the Business Plan?

1. An officer in the Employability Team is informed by the local further education partners that there has been increased demand in the number of young people applying to study. This demand cannot be accommodated due to the limited places allocated.
2. After discussion within the team the issue is brought to the attention to the Head of Economic Development and then the Director EEI.
3. It then be discussed at a strategic level. This could be between the Directors 1-to-1 meeting with the Chief Executive or at Corporate Management Team. Liaison with partners in the sector supports the position that this is an area where the region's voice is needed
4. When lobbying on increased training places is appropriate or recommended then the relevant Service Committee Chair is informed of the recommendation and the issues surrounding the case and a report prepared for Service Committee. Community Planning Partners are also engaged on this matter.
5. Action agreed – to go ahead with the formation of a lobbying plan with local partners.





### 4 Planning your Advocacy

#### What influence are you trying to achieve?

Extra training and further education places allocated to Dumfries and Galloway for young people

#### Who is responsible for leading the project?

DGC Employability & Skills Team would be responsible for leading the project with partners through existing community planning groups. They would also work with other services within the Council if necessary, such as Education Services.

Economic, Environment and Infrastructure Committee will monitor the advocacy work through the Business Plan process.

#### What are the risks and benefits?

Benefits (example):

- Gain additional places
- This will increase the number of young people in our region entering further education.
- Possibly attract more young students to Dumfries and Galloway.
- More young people will be equipped for employment and we will have a skilled workforce in the future.
- In the long run, having a skilled workforce will contribute to improving productivity and sustainable economic growth in Dumfries and Galloway.
- Increasing the delivery and service of our local colleges thereby retaining/up skilling lecturers.

Risks:

- The allocation process for Dumfries training and higher education places is re-assessed and we receive fewer places.
- We succeed in our aim but cannot fill new places and so open to reputational risk.
- We do not do the necessary preparation and evidence gathering and so are unsuccessful, i.e. if we have already have been given places in the past that we have not used.

#### What is the policy background?

We are aware of the policy background of the issue we are advocating on and the wider political context we are operating in. This will ensure that we are lobbying the right decision-makers and inform our advocacy timetable as well as help us develop our key messages.

One of our Strategic Actions in Dumfries and Galloway's Regional Economic Strategy is to achieve 'Better Skills, Better Opportunities'. This includes activities such as producing a workforce with the right skills, maximising the potential of the Crichton campus and increase opportunities for the region's young people. Extra college places and funding to support these places will increase the positive destinations for school leavers and provide a 'better skilled workforce'. We will use the baseline evidence that Dumfries and Galloway has relatively high numbers in low skilled employment and a high rate of youth unemployment to evidence the positive impact further college places could provide.

This also resonates with the Scottish Governments Economic Strategic Priority on 'Learning, Skills and Well-being' which acknowledges that a skilled, educated and creative workforce is essential to creating a more competitive and resilient economy. The Scottish Government has made a commitment to invest in Higher Education and recognises that:

*'In the face of the ongoing effects of the recession, it is vital that we develop the skills and employability of Scotland's workforce, and reduce the number of people who are out of work or underemployed – particularly amongst our young people'.*

We need to use the pre-existing knowledge of the Employability Team and use horizon scanning to be aware of factors that may influence our desired effect. For example:

- What consultation opportunities are arising with the Scottish Funding Council
- How many college places are other colleges of similar size and catchment awarded
- Is there any contacts close to, or within the Scottish Funding Council that we have a good working relationship and should utilise

#### **Who are you trying to influence?**

Initially we will try to influence local colleges and those we have pre-existing relationships with to work with us in partnership on our issue.

When the plan has been approved and we have significant enough support we will be advocating on our 'ask' to:

- Scottish Funding Council
- Skills Development Scotland
- Scottish Government

#### **Who are your partners?**

We would work with The Local Employability Partnership – this includes many of those concerned with further education in Dumfries and Galloway (i.e. Glasgow University, UWS, Barony, Crichton Institute).

We would also work with Skills Development Scotland and DWP Job Centre.

We may also work with the Community Planning Partnership, the Dumfries and Galloway Chamber of Commerce and Federation of Small Business.

#### **Who may be supportive or oppose your campaign?**

Opposed: Other colleges in nearby areas who feel their funding allocation will be threatened.

Supportive: local MSPs (list and regional).

#### **What is your timetable?**

Our timetable will centre around the Scottish Funding Council's timetable and any Scottish Government Committees (what date does evidence need to be submitted).

#### **Appendix 4 – Working in Partnership Example**

South of Scotland Alliance (SoSA) produced the South of Scotland Local Broadband Plan (LBP) in 2011, which was submitted to Scottish Government. The plan set out the business case to bring about a transformational change to our region through the provision of improved broadband infrastructure.

The required influence of this project was achieved and in 2012 the Plan became the basis of the Scottish Government's National Infrastructure Plan to rollout Superfast Broadband to all of rural Scotland. Furthermore Dumfries & Galloway Council and Scottish Borders Council, as Pathfinder South, were subsequently invited to participate in the "Vanguard" of the Scottish Government, Scottish Wide Area Network (SWAN) programme.

##### **Who were the Project Partners?**

The South of Scotland Alliance is a partnership which consists of:

- Dumfries and Galloway Council – project partner and co-funder
- Scottish Borders Council – project partner and co-funder
- Scottish Enterprise – project partner (to engage business support and act as an additional advocacy partner)

##### **Whom was influenced and why?**

Policy and funding sources - Broadband Delivery UK (UK Government) & Scottish Government

##### **Why were attempts successful?**

The two local authorities had a track record of working together on a previous similar project. Elected members in both local authorities recognised the importance of, and supported the objective and allocated substantial funding and resource.

Senior Officers was a key driver in pursuing the policy and delivery of the objectives at both local and national level. Locally there was senior management support across Economic Development and Business and Technology Solutions, with good working relationships and contacts at a local and national level which was vital.

## Appendix 5 – Building Relationships Example

Our Council has built many strong working relationships and should be encouraged to use these to advocate for Dumfries and Galloway when appropriate.

For example, one of our Directors is currently the Chair of the national Timber Transport Forum. This has involved advocating for the continued provision of the Strategic Timber Transport Fund before each three year spending review. In this role they have met and worked with influential decision-makers such as appropriate Ministers in Holyrood, Westminster and Wales.

Our Director's efforts with the Timber Transport Forum, along with his working relationship with our Council's Convener at the time (who was Vice President of COSLA), was integral to securing the Strategic Timber Transport Fund. Following its successful implementation some £51m worth of projects to address solutions to discrete timber transport problems have been undertaken throughout Scotland. Dumfries and Galloway has benefited from £12M investment from the fund.





## Appendix 6 – Guideline for Delivering an Advocacy Message

### Know what your message is

- It is essential that you know what your message is; be clear in what you are asking for and why.
- Consider your previous approaches and the approaches through alliances and partnerships so that all messages are on point.

### Make sure your message is convincing and correct

- It is essential that your message has a coherent argument and has the evidence to support it.
- Make sure your message is focussed and relevant throughout.
- Take advice on the language and tone of your message.
- Pre-empt how you may be questioned or argued against and build your defence.

### Know your audience

- To identify who you are trying to influence.
- It is likely that when advocating you will have more than one audience and these will have been outlined when planning your advocacy.
- For example, how you deliver your message when advocating politicians and policy makers may differ than how you deliver a message on the same issue to businesses or the public.

### Target your Message (but ensure a consistent narrative)

- It is important to tailor your message to the type of audience you may have. The following considerations should be made:
- Will they understand the message?
  - Ensure your message is simple and clear. The message will not be successfully delivered if it is not understood.
- Think about why is your message relevant to them? What is in it for them?
- Avoid jargon – use the audience’s language, not yours.
- Who is best to deliver your message?
  - Make sure the messenger is the most suitable and credible to the particular audience in question.
  - If a relationship has already been built up between a member of staff and those who you are trying to influence then this trust should be utilised.
  - If the messenger needs further information or training to ensure the effectiveness of the message then this should be offered.
- How best is your message delivered?
  - One message can have different impacts depending on how the message is delivered.
- Think of how the message will best be conveyed (i.e. through a presentation/letter/meeting)
- When is the best time to deliver your message?
- How effective your message is often depends on when you make it. For example, an opinion which is included in a policy consultation or review will be more receptive than if it is offered up after the policy change has been made.
- Refer back to your lobbying timetable which should be drawn up in the planning process.

## Appendix 7 – Successful Message Example

A recent example of striking the right balance between positivity and need was when Dumfries and Galloway achieved priority status within the current Heritage Lottery Funding (HLF) programme in early 2013.

Areas with priority status receive additional support from HLF to access grant funding. Though funding is not ring fenced projects are offered additional advice and support at the development stage. We achieved this status by putting across our message well to officers from HLF in Scotland concerned with reviewing its programmes and assigning status levels.

We shared the positive things that we as a region could achieve with the extra support and possible funding. We identified specific future projects to decision-makers that may seek funding – such as the Kirkcudbright Art Gallery project. This allowed decision-makers to be sure that we were committed to delivering successful projects with their help.

We also successfully demonstrated that HLF has not awarded a lot of grants in Dumfries and Galloway. We evidenced this claim with nationwide facts showing the trends in funding allocated in the past.

By our Council demonstrating a willingness to work in partnership with HLF and offering resources to support their work in the region (and giving examples of what this work would include), we convinced them that we would both mutually benefit from achieving priority status.

---

Securing funding for  
Dumfries and Galloway  
opportunities -  
Kirkcudbright Town Hall



## Appendix 8 – Constructing and Communicating our Message Example

Our Council, as part of the South of Scotland Alliance secured ring-fenced European funding for the South of Scotland (D&G and Scottish Borders Council areas) under the new EU programming period for 2006-2013. This ring-fenced allocation of £19 million for the South of Scotland aligned to our Competitiveness Strategy.

EU funds come in 7 year tranches and securing funds for any given area is a highly competitive process (e.g. rural areas are competing with each other and with urban areas at both EU and Member State levels). We were the only area in Scotland to have funding ring-fenced within the Lowland Uplands Programme for Scotland (other areas had to compete for funding on a project-by-project basis). As a further consequence, we managed to retain our own Programme Secretariat at local level to help run the programme, a further bonus.

### Why were we successful?

**We knew our audience:** We identified that decisions on allocations are made at 3 levels and that we needed to influence each level; Brussels (for rural-urban balance and level of Member State allocations and priorities for targeting), UK Departments (Europe is a 'reserved issue'), Scottish Government (dividing the cake at Scottish level).

**We constructed a good message:** We were strategic in how we constructed our message. We ensured we had a positive and strategic message that was focussed on what we could contribute to EU Commission and Scottish Government objectives. This was stressed through our message by opening meetings with a "we are not here to moan about money...but to help you (decision-maker) achieve your objectives" approach.

Our Competitiveness Strategy was "aimed at assisting the Scottish Government achieve its main goal of improving Scotland's overall competitiveness".

**We made sure our messages were known internally:** We had strong Member support and understanding. Relevant staff both in Scottish Borders and ourselves knew our agreed messages and we worked together well, investing a lot of time, effort and money into the project.

**We were proactive in how we approached our targets:** We succeeded because we were continually horizon-scanning. We had a strong presence in Brussels through our national role as Secretariat to the UK Partnership and also via our membership of Conference of Peripheral Maritime Regions (an EU-wide network).

The project empowered Council officers to 'do the groundwork' with civil servants and EU Commission staff.

We also were proactive in the fact that we did not wait for UK or Scottish Government officials to tell us how we would benefit from the programmes. We did our own thinking and 'consulted them' on how we saw things playing out. This was about Regional Development and we were best placed to consult with them as to what was good for our economy. This was a shift from our usual 'passive recipient' approach to being an 'active regional stakeholder'.

**We adapted our approach to each target:**

- First, the Alliance visited Brussels for a meeting with the EU Commission Director in charge of UK Structural Funds. The Commission had defined the funding priority for the EU as “Competitiveness & Jobs” so in advance we drafted our own ‘South of Scotland Regional Competitiveness Strategy 2006-13’. We presented this as “a draft” for discussion with the Commission. We received his endorsement and recognition that ‘no other region’ had deployed such a pro-active approach.
- Next we took this to the then Department of Trade & industry in London through the Council’s role as Secretariat to the UK-wide Local Government Rural Network. We commended the approach to the Minister at the time and argued for parity with Urban Areas when decisions were taken on UK regional programme allocations.
- Finally, we targeted the Scottish Governments Structural funds division and EU portfolio Minister at the time (including holding meetings at Holyrood) where we presented the South of Scotland Competiveness Strategy (as commended by the EU Commission). Again, our pro-active approach was commended by the minister.



## **Appendix 9 – Guideline to Monitor and Evaluate an Advocacy Project**

Evaluating your advocacy project throughout the process is essential. Advocacy projects can take a long time and a lot of work so it is important to stop and re-examine your goals as you carry out your project. In many of our past lobbying this has probably been achieved naturally.

We should monitor our progress, recognising new risks and challenges that we encounter throughout.

We should learn from our experiences and share best practice throughout the organisation. Though each advocacy campaign will differ we can learn from our successes and failings to ensure that we steadily improve how we advocate.

### **Monitoring your Advocacy Project**

The following should be clear and re-examined regularly:

#### **Why are you advocating?**

- Do you have a clear advocacy goal with objectives that relate to the context you are working in, and some Indicators to measure the progress of your advocacy?

#### **Who is advocating?**

- Do you know who is responsible for the leading the project?
- Do you know who your partners are?
- Do you know who supports your project and who does not? (This may become clearer as the project progresses)

#### **When are you advocating?**

- Do you have a timeline of key influencing moments, to be developed as you come across new opportunities?

#### **Who are your targets?**

- Do you have identified targets and understand their role and influence?
- Do you have an idea on how best to influence these people/organisations?

#### **What are you advocating?**

- Do you have an outline of the key messages tailored to your targets, and a strong idea of the different approaches you could take to communicate them?
- Do you have an idea of the activities you are going to use to deliver those messages through advocacy tactics and the resources needed to implement these?

## Assessing your Project's progress

As you monitor your project, keep reassessing the situation in light of your overall goal and objectives. If you are not making much progress, be prepared to change your strategy if agreed. This could include working with new partners and allies, and don't be afraid to switch either the decision-makers you are targeting or the tactics that you are using to reach them. Monitoring involves:

- Gathering of evidence and feeding this into the project if relevant.
- Checking whether the project is being executed according to the plan or not.
- Questioning the progress towards achieving the goals.
- Assessing what activities worked and what did not.
- Changing the strategy if needs be.

## Evaluating

Once the project is completed you need to evaluate so that key findings are shared and built upon to help and that the success can be evidenced and celebrated. Each advocacy project will have different objectives. It is important to remember that project achievements are not just whether we are successful in achieving our ultimate objective (e.g. we made our argument well, we made new relationships that we can use in future, we raised our region's reputation).

- What was the issue and project's objective?
- Whom did you influence and why?
- What did we expect to happen?
- What actually happened?
- Why were there differences between what we had planned and what actually happened?
- What didn't work well and could potentially be stopped in the future? Why didn't it work? Why should it be stopped?
- What worked well and should be continued in the future?
- What could we start doing to improve the process of organising? What would you do differently if you could re-visit?
- What did it cost? (in time and money)

## Reporting

- have we ensured feedback to all interested organisations?
- Are there any 'lessons learned' to share with staff, Committees or partners?

**If you would like some help understanding this or need it in another format please contact 030 33 33 3000**

**Contact: Planning and Performance Unit  
Dumfries and Galloway Council, Council Offices,  
English Street, Dumfries DG1 2DD  
Telephone: 030 33 33 3000**

**Agreed by Elected Members                      23 June 2015  
Next review date                                      December 2017**